COMMITTEE ON TOLERANCE AND UNDERSTANDING

INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

DISCUSSION PAPER #1

OCTOBER, 1984.

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This is the fourth discussion paper presented by the Committee on Tolerance and Understanding. The first three papers dealt with the topics of Private Education, Native Education and Public Education.

Albertans are invited to respond to the draft recommendations contained in this discussion paper, in order that their input may be considered prior to the presentation of the Committee's final report to the Minister of Education in December, 1984.

The Committee will be pleased to receive written communications from interested Albertans. Such communications may be addressed to the Committee at:

The Committee on Tolerance and Understanding
#220, 1220 Kensington Road N.W.
CALGARY, Alberta
T2N 3P5

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preamble		4
Section 1:	Cultural Diversity and the Role of Education	9
Section 2:	Intercultural Education	16
	Teacher Training	17
	Language Instruction	22
	Curriculum	24
	Special Initiatives	26
	Community Resources	30
Section 3:	Intercultural Education and the Needs of Immigrants	33
Recommendations:		37

PREAMBLE

Alberta is a multicultural society.

No single group with common ethnic roots forms a majority of the population.

Our citizens come from more than 100 countries of origin.

There are over 1,040 cultural heritage organizations in communities throughout the province.

The depth of our understanding of our cultural communities will have a major impact on the way Alberta develops as a society.

This discussion paper explores the challenges and responsibilities of our education system in developing the tolerance, understanding and respect for others necessary in our society in order to turn diversity into a source of learning and strength.

It is now time for Alberta to recognize the vital role that education must play on a continuing basis to assist in the development and understanding of the richness of our multicultural communities.

It is now time for Alberta to have an explicit intercultural education policy.

It is now time for Alberta's universities to provide adequate training for its teachers to face the day to day realities of multiculturalism in the classroom.

It is one thing to be aware of the multicultural realities in Alberta society in 1984, but in order to understand, appreciate and develop the richness and opportunities afforded to us in our society, it is essential that Albertans have the experience of enjoying multiculturalism on a day to day basis.

The members of the Committee on Tolerance and Understanding have had a rare opportunity to experience the diversity of Alberta's cultural communities at first hand.

At public hearings, within our schools, at meetings with representatives of multicultural communities, in mosques, cathedrals, settlements and reservations, we learned of the dreams, aspirations and fears of our minorities.

Cultural diversity has a meaning which extends beyond the physical expression in dance, music and literature. As Native communities have pointed out, it is more than beads and feathers - it is an examination and understanding of traditions and values. Cultural diversity is a concept where there is a willing acceptance in everyday life of the human differences of others, and an equal acceptance of the expression by individuals and groups of their cultural differences.

Human understanding respects the rights of individuals. Cultural understanding respects the rights of groups. The two are interwoven and inseparable. The challenge of the future is the manner in which we work together to realize the tremendous potential represented by the cultural diversity found in this province.

In this discussion paper, we refer to Intercultural Education. By this we mean an educational system that brings together various cultural communities to interact and share in an appreciation and understanding of multiculturalism.

Intercultural Education must be a significant force in the development of multiculturalism.

Schools provide a marvellous vehicle to create the learning environment which will act as a catalyst for children to appreciate and understand cultural communities by sharing experiences on a daily basis.

One need only visit the schools of Alberta to observe the diversity of cultures represented by the children in each classroom.

How we deal with this reality in the classroom is an essential element in creating the sense of understanding of those who come from varying backgrounds and cultures, for they will become the adult citizens of future Alberta.

Much has been done to overcome the barriers of prejudice, ignorance and bigotry in Alberta.

Albertans can point with pride to numerous examples of action by Government and Albertans generally which promote tolerance, understanding and respect for all people.

From our legislative commitment in the Alberta Bill of Rights and the Individual's Rights Protection Act, to the record of achievement of the Alberta Cultural Heritage Council, the Cultural Heritage Branch, the Alberta Human Rights Commission, and thousands of examples of day to day commitment by individual Albertans, we can see progress towards the building of a positive environment which will overcome the waste of human resources, the human tragedy and the inner hurt that are the consequences of prejudice and discrimination.

The evolution of Canada as a multicultural society has not been without its problems. In the past, racial discrimination, religious bigotry and prejudice against minority groups have manifested themselves across Canada.

Sadly, discrimination, in subtle and sometimes not so subtle forms, can still be found in Alberta today. Submissions to the Committee from minority groups, particularly visible minorities, told of many incidents of intolerance.

In a democratic society, if we are to continue to enjoy the rights and freedoms that are so dear to all of us, we must all share the responsibility to contribute to the overall development of our nation.

Canada is unique amongst the nations in its multicultural character. This uniqueness is a resource and a source of strength.

Cultural diversity is a reality which is only beginning to develop its potential in becoming a social, economic and political force. Albertans must be prepared for the opportunities and challenges this presents.

The role of education becomes paramount in teaching the skills and attitudes necessary for citizens to develop fully in a pluralistic society.

Our schools must be utilized as active participants in fostering intercultural awareness, understanding, and appreciation of diversity.

This discussion paper will highlight many areas to be considered which will, if recommendations are implemented, encourage our educators to develop intercultural education programs and policies which will assist Albertans to appreciate the fullness of life which is possible within a multicultural society.

SECTION I

CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND THE ROLE OF EDUCATION

Initially, the primary focus of multiculturalism and cultural heritage policies was to provide support directly to cultural and ethnic groups to aid each in retaining a distinct identity and increase appreciation of cultural heritage among all Canadians.

The emphasis is now shifting to education as the realization grows that governments have a responsibility to ensure that society is understanding of and responsive to the rights of all individuals and groups who make up our cultural mosaic. The best efforts to foster tolerance and understanding are doomed to failure if, on the one hand, we encourage and support groups to establish an identity but, on the other hand, fail to address situations created by a lack of human understanding.

The only approach that addresses this challenge is that of intercultural education. It recognizes the fact that people belong to groups which represent many cultures, and its purpose is to bring people together, so that they learn about each other's cultures through interaction and shared experiences. Intercultural education exposes children and adults to the similarities and differences that exist among cultures and provides opportunities for people to learn about each other through experience. It is not only the school system that has a part to play. Government departments and agencies, service groups, community organizations and cultural and ethnic groups all share the responsibility to create a multicultural society free of prejudice and discrimination.

The commitment of the Government of Alberta to foster tolerance and understanding through respect for cultural diversity and human rights is clear. In 1972 the Government of Alberta enacted the Individual's Rights Protection Act which is unique among human rights codes in Canada in that it supercedes all other provincial legislation with the exception of The Uniform Building Standards Act. The spirit of the Act is stated in the preamble.

> "WHEREAS it is recognized in Alberta as a fundamental principle and as a matter of public policy that all persons are equal in dignity and rights without regard to race, religious beliefs, colour, sex, physical characteristics, age, ancestry or place of origin;"

In 1972, the Government of Alberta officially adopted a Cultural Heritage policy, Position Paper No. 7, which has the following objectives:

(1) To give Albertans increasing pride and identity as a people.

(2) To unite us in singular strength through understanding of our individual ethno-backgrounds; the sharing of our cultural diversity and richness, and appreciation of our evolving identity;

(3) To preserve the cultural wealth of our past; the rites, arts, music, etc. of our native peoples; the old-world contributions of our immigrant settlers; the songs, dances, social ways that each ethno-group brought by way of cultural dowry to this new land and which, in many cases, is becoming a common cultural mosaic, uniquely our own.

(4) To stimulate the living arts - painting, dancing, music, handicrafts, the human drama -precisely because of our diversity of heritage background, and thus help Alberta's writers, musicians, dramatists, dancers, etc. to national and international acceptance, appreciation and recognition.

The one policy area that has not been addressed by the Government of Alberta in respect to upholding Alberta's provincial policies on cultural heritage and individual rights is that of education.

Though the education system is a major vehicle to reach teachers, parents and children of all ages, the role of the education system has never been clearly defined in respect to either a supportive or catalytic role in upholding provincial policies.

That there is a role for the education system is clear in light of the submissions received by the Committee. Many submissions identified major concerns that indicate the education system has not kept pace with change in society nor does it respond to the needs of students from cultural groups. There were charges that the school system does not appreciate or respond to the needs of students who face a cultural adjustment from their home environment to the school environment.

> "Many of our students cannot relate in a meaningful manner their school experience to life experiences at home. A large number of our students are not at ease with their own identity. Schools for instance do not have the tools required to create pride in each child's background and history. We do not have a history of Alberta that reflects the contribution of our forefathers. A number of our children are attempting to reject their association with their cultural group to adopt the majority culture and language. Being rejected by their cultural group for this and unaccepted by the dominant group for their differences, they are becoming misfits in our society. Others who find that the school is not responding to their needs simply drop out to pursue their own lifestyle. The lack of success our school system has in meeting the needs of minority group children can probably be measured in large part by the number of school dropouts."
>
> Lakeland Roman Catholic School District

There is an opportunity for the education system to be more active in fostering human understanding and cultural awareness.

> "The tolerant attitudes upon which a functioning multicultural society is founded can be taught and learned....The delivery to youth of an effective and compassionate understanding of the workings of a multicultural society and the policing of this task must surely be most easily and effectively accomplished by the certified teachers of this province as an organized group."
>
> Jewish Federation of Edmonton

Educators have a difficult challenge, as they balance their responsibility to ensure children learn and respect history and tradition while, at the same time, prepare children to live in a rapidly changing society.

Education must combine conservation with the role of transformation, and too often its inclination has been to react to change rather than being proactive. It is clear that to balance the above, public education must keep pace with social and technological change to ensure it is responsive to the community.

> "Education is seen as the means to a solution to various problems: let education work its magic and all will be resolved. Although proper education may reduce prejudice, it cannot stand alone against such a virulent force, and those who expect the schools to carry the major burden will be disappointed. Government agencies, volunteer groups, church organizations, community associations, parent-teacher groups, political organizations, professional associations and others should all be involved in the fight. Indeed, concerted national and international efforts are required. Education can support these efforts, but it is not a panacea."
>
> Alberta Association for Multicultural Education

For too long, education in the classroom has been isolated from the activities and programs in the community. The classroom is a unique setting where children from all backgrounds are brought together and educational opportunities exist on a day to day basis to learn through experience. We cannot afford not to use these opportunities to foster tolerance and understanding through intercultural education in both school and community.

"It is the Council's view...that specific educational programs promoting positive attitudes towards ethnic and multicultural variety should be in place. The Council also attaches great importance to the existence of mechanisms, both to monitor the effectiveness of such programs, and to encourage adherence to the multicultural principles and ideals of the government and people of the Province of Alberta, not only by those engaged in the teaching professions, but also by those in public service in general."

Alberta Cultural Heritage Council

In re-examining the Government of Alberta's policies in education the Committee found that the Goals of Schooling and the Goals of Education are significant statements which implicitly support the objectives of intercultural education. In light of the changes in our society and its increasing cultural diversity, the Committee feels it is an appropriate time to review and update these goals to explicitly include a commitment to increasing our children's appreciation for cultural diversity and respect for human rights.

Currently we have the opportunity to put in place the educational policies and structures to meet both the challenges and opportunities increasing cultural diversity presents. We can learn from the experiences in other jurisdictions, where rapid population growth and the growing demands of cultural groups have resulted in major new initiatives. In Ontario, there is a multicultural policy, and the policy has also been applied to the programs and services of the Department of Education.

"The Ministry of Education acknowledges the responsibility of preparing all pupils to live in our multicultural society and in an increasingly interdependent world. Accordingly it strives to ensure that the three principles of Ontario's multicultural policy - equality, freedom of access to public services and facilities, and right to maintain one's cultural heritage - are operational in all schools."

Ministry of Education, Province of Ontario

At the local school board level, Vancouver, Saskatoon and Toronto have adopted and implemented multiculturalism and race relations policies.

In Vancouver, the race relations policy allows the School Board to "respond actively and decisively to issues of racism in teacher training, educational policy and reading materials and in the various levels of government in the community. The Board wants students and parents to know clearly that it will not tolerate any form of racial bias within its jurisdiction."

In Toronto, the Board of Education created an Equal Opportunity Office with an Advisor on Race Relations to implement their policy, as well as a Race Relations Committee to monitor the implementation. This allotment of manpower and resources is a clear commitment to their policy, which states:

> "The Toronto Board of Education condemns and will not tolerate any expression of racial/ethnic bias, nor bias on the basis of sex or sexual orientation, in any form by its trustees, administration, staff or students."

Saskatoon based its policy on Article 1 of the United Nations "Universal Declaration of Human Rights", and included in its race relations policy not only statements in respect to developing racial harmony and respect for cultural diversity, but also an affirmation that it is an equal opportunity employer.

In Alberta, the Calgary Board of Education has developed a policy that spells out clearcut principles and details the guidelines for the enactment of the policy in respect to students, the school and the community. The policy statement, as follows, is itself a model for all school boards to consider and is an example of the leadership that can be found in local school boards across Alberta.

> "The Calgary Board of Education acknowledges cultural diversity as a positive feature of Canadian society and endorses the concept of Multiculturalism as an interdisciplinary process designed to foster the development of cultural understanding.
>
> Multiculturalism assumes an attitude which accepts differences, respects the values of others, and provides all students an opportunity to benefit by experiencing and understanding the cultural pluralism which is Canada's reality.

> To this end, the Board encourages the provision of learning experiences in all schools whereby all students have opportunities to develop pride in their cultural heritage, self-esteem and understanding of Canada's cultures."
>
> Calgary Board of Education

With the realization that the implications of cultural diversity extend beyond the realm of culture alone, it is time to clearly define the role of education in upholding and supporting provincial policies of cultural diversity and individual rights.

SECTION 2

INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

Education must be intercultural in nature. A positive learning environment is vital to the development of self-esteem which the Committee feels is essential for the development of a more tolerant and understanding society. Children who feel good about themselves will transmit their feelings of worth to others. High self-esteem results in a secure individual who does not fear that which is different but welcomes differences as challenging, exciting and personally fulfilling.

Self-esteem is a prerequisite to open and positive relationships with others. To develop self-esteem, successful programs are those which provide the opportunity for shared experiences where students interact, and which promote self understanding through awareness of personal abilities, competencies, strengths, personal characteristics, interests and values.

> "We are convinced that these attitudes can be taught, and taught successfully, through sensitivity and awareness. It cannot be instilled through rigid rules of respect for "traditional" institutions and values, but must result from students putting themselves in others' shoes, understanding others' ways of living and understanding others' perspectives."
>
> Cheryl Snider, Red Cross Youth

Intercultural education is an integrated approach based on providing shared experience. Curriculum, learning resources and audio visual materials are all complementary to the process, but the key ingredient is first-hand experience for students.

> "Tolerance seems rather consistently to result from children associating with each other in ways where they must work together in situations of equality and mutual dependence. Hence, such things as school disciplinary codes can be very effective. So also can the encouragement of small work groups, where children of different backgrounds must work together towards a common goal."
>
> Dr. Norman Buchignani, University of Lethbridge

Cultural groups have recognized the education system as the best source for fostering tolerance and understanding, but it is perceived that our schools do not have the expertise and resources to meet the challenges represented by the increasing needs and aspirations of cultural groups.

> "School systems have a tremendous challenge. They must make every effort to develop self pride in children and pride in their cultural heritage. Without this background, children will not be able to approach the next step which is to relate to other ethnic groups. The challenge that each school has is to bring each child to be able to function at par with his peers in society. For this to be realized, we need trained staff, programs and materials. In this important work, the school must not work in isolation."
>
> Lakeland Roman Catholic Separate School District No. 150

Intercultural education does require a commitment of time, effort and energy by the individual teacher.

Without the appropriate training, the support of practical, sound curriculum and learning resources and the endorsement and application of the principles of intercultural education throughout a school system, teachers are faced with near-insurmountable barriers which only the very determined can overcome.

With growing recognition of the need for clearcut policies on intercultural education, administrators must take a step into the classroom and gain an appreciation first hand of the day to day challenges the teacher faces in the classroom with regard to cultural diversity.

TEACHER TRAINING

Over the years there has been a reluctance on the part of many teachers to bring an intercultural approach into the classroom.

Both preservice and inservice training programs need to be examined in light of the skills and expertise demanded of teachers in the classroom today.

> "Changes to preservice and inservice teacher education is a basic requirement. Teachers should know the fundamentals of the social psychology of prejudice so that we may guide students' learning and we should have the necessary assessment and selection skills in order to screen instructional materials."
>
> Alberta Association for Multicultural Education

> "At present, hardly any of our teachers have received formal training in cultural education. A large number, for instance, would likely not recognize the importance of ciarifying one's sense of identity in order to be able to relate to individuals from another ethnic group. Teachers must learn to function effectively within other cultural groups and to react positively to members of that group. Educators must know how to prepare minority group children to function without their own ethnic cultures and to understand and function within other cultures and communities. Teachers must also have the skills and knowledge to help children from the majority culture to respect and function within other ethnic communities."
>
> Lakeland Roman Catholic School District

Teacher training at our post-secondary institutions has come under close scrutiny lately as many students and teachers are questioning the quality and practicality of the training they are receiving. The inadequacies of teacher training in the intercultural field must be addressed.

> "It is not enough to tell us that children of minority groups have problems in schools, for we learn to approach minority children with dread and low expectations. We do not learn how to effectively work with them, and we are often left with the impression that their culture, not the system, is at fault for their failures, it is not enough to teach us that stereotypes and biases exist in textbooks. We must learn how to pinpoint them and balance them through instruction. Most importantly, we must discover the many ways in which such stereotypes and biases influence our own attitudes and behaviour."
>
> Carol Leroy, B.A.
> 2nd year Education Student, University of Alberta

"Regrettably, my knowledge of multiculturalism in Alberta stems from three limited sources. These are:

1) personal travel
2) elementary school
3) Heritage Days celebration at Hawrelak Park.

I believe this situation should not happen. Every teacher should be exposed to multicultural studies at the University level."

David Paterson, B.A., 2nd Year Education Student, University of Alberta

Teacher training has not kept pace with the changes in society, much less the changes in the classroom, and our post-secondary institutions have a responsibility to make sure this neglect is rectified. It is time to put a priority on practical research to ensure that programs of study are updated to equip teachers for teaching students in a culturally diverse society.

"We need rather, therefore, to explore whether, within the framework of our present program, we can achieve a sharper focus on the cultural context of teaching and learning in the classroom. Teaching <u>about</u> multiculturalism is one thing; it has to be done. Having a multicultural <u>awareness</u> and bringing this to bear, whenever appropriate, in all our teaching, is another; it is the latter at which we should aim, if we want to contribute more effectively, as teacher-educators, to preparing teachers for multicultural schools. We need to cultivate this awareness in ourselves in order to find ways of cultivating it in our prospective teachers."

Faculty of Education, University of Alberta

At the Faculty of Education in Calgary, an ad hoc Faculty Committee on "Discrimination in School, Classroom and Curricular Materials" is examining the compulsory courses of the elementary and secondary route programs with a view to identifying those matters bearing on stereotyping and discriminatory practices which it can be expected will be dealt with in all sections of the core courses.

Topics under consideration are:

1. Attitudes to minority groups
2. Attitudes and practices with regard to the handicapped
3. Religious discrimination
4. Methods of textbook analysis for identification of biases
5. Identification of practices leading to sex role stereotyping in the classroom
6. Methods of dealing with race problems in the classroom.

Optional courses, inservice courses and workshops are also being considered to augment the complementary courses.

The multicultural awareness of teachers has been a priority with the Alberta Teachers' Association, and they have focused on reaching teachers in the schools and making them aware of how to incorporate a multicultural approach in the classroom. The Multicultural Education Specialist Council conducts workshops on multiculturalism and the Association for Multicultural Education acts as a clearing house through which information about activities, publications, resources and concerns in the area of multiculturalism can be shared and disseminated. The A.T.A. established a Committee on Stereotyping and Discriminatory Practices which conducts ongoing programs to provide assistance for teachers in identifying and overcoming discrimination.

Efforts must be increased to combat what many educators have identified as a serious obstacle to intercultural education - the reluctance of teachers to adopt an intercultural approach, which can be traced to the following factors:

1. No in-service
2. No central resource area
3. Overwork
4. Too many pressing compulsory programs
5. Other specialties

6. No time for optional materials
7. Lack of knowledge about multiculturalism
8. Multiculturalism as a threat to their good teaching: they feel that someone is saying that they are not doing a good job
9. Apathy in general
10. Dislike of anything new
11. Bigotry and lack of belief in this concept
12. Perception that they <u>are</u> doing multicultural teaching, when in fact all they are doing is something one day, or one week a year, when it should be ongoing all year.

A. Skoreyko, SPEDS Teacher,
Brentwood Elementary, Calgary

A major source of inservice activity which can be found throughout the province is that initiated by the local school jurisdiction. The Calgary Board of Education is only one example that has, as its priority, teacher training.

> "Activities include the development of policy and regulations, the provision of assistance to teachers through curriculum development work, teacher inservice activities, and a program by which all staff are evaluated on a regular basis. Ultimately, the success in dealing with intolerance at the school level represents the efforts of dedicated, sensitive, creative professionals who are in the front line of working with people of different cultures, races, creeds, languages and expectations."
>
> Calgary Board of Education

Educators and teachers are the key to the success of a program that meets the individual needs of students and builds self esteem.

Without special teacher preparation, the potential of intercultural education will never be realized.

LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION

The Committee on Tolerance and Understanding acknowledges the initiatives in both policies and practice of the Department of Education in respect to language instruction. The policies indicate our province's commitment to multiculturalism in a bilingual framework and are summarized as follows:

> Alberta Education supports the provision of opportunities for students who wish to acquire or maintain proficiency in French so that they may have access to instructional programs in that language.
>
> Alberta Education supports the provision of opportunities for students who wish to acquire or maintain languages other than English or French so that they may have access to instructional programs in those languages.
>
> Alberta Education will assist school boards in providing instructional programs for students who, having recently arrived in the province, require special assistance in learning English as a second language so that they can follow instruction in English.

In the area of non-official language instruction, Alberta is recognized as a leader in accommodating the aspirations of cultural and ethnic groups within the public school system. In September, 1974, a Ukrainian-English bilingual program was launched in Edmonton's public schools. Today, Edmonton public schools are unique in terms of the number of optional bilingual/immersion programs offered including French, Ukrainian, German, Hebrew, Arabic and Chinese.

> "Mutually increased awareness and appreciation are made possible for the bilingual/immersion program students and all-English program students as they learn and interact in the same school setting. Two of our elementary schools have three programs, i.e. French Immersion, all-English and Ukrainian Bilingual, existing harmoniously."
>
> Edmonton Public School Board

During 1980-81, 5,627 students were enrolled in over 80 "Saturday schools", instructing in at least 20 languages. Almost one third of these schools were Ukrainian. These programs are administered by the Alberta Cultural Heritage Branch.

The policies of the Department have struck an important balance between the need to recognize our official languages and the importance of fostering and preserving the heritage languages of our citizens. The spirit and intent of these policies must be upheld by every school jurisdiction and it is vital that our ethnic, cultural and native communities are aware of the opportunities within the public education system to have language instruction.

CURRICULUM

The results of the Curriculum Audit Review Committee were reported in the third discussion paper, "Public Education", of the Committee. To reiterate, over 90% of the approximately 3,600 resources reviewed in the audit were judged by the Audit Committee to be acceptable. The Committee identified specific problem areas which are summarized by the following statement:

> "The most common form of discrimination found was an inequitable use of male pronouns and male collective nouns. There are also specific examples of sexism. The most serious omission reported was the failure to recognize people with disabilities in any representative manner. Examples of discrimination related to age or religion were essentially non-existent. A very few books with examples of racial discrimination were found. In some cases, steps have already been taken to delist the books."
>
> Discussion Paper #3, "Public Education"

The Committee feels that the results of the audit are a clear indication that the curriculum being used in our schools does not foster intolerance, prejudice or discrimination. The most serious challenge is that its omissions demonstrate the need to ensure the curriculum and learning resources reflect the cultural reality of our past, our present, and our future. There is a well-defined need for the curriculum and learning resources to promote tolerance, understanding and respect.

From an intercultural perspective, historical omissions present an incomplete and distorted view of the development of our province and country, and contribute to myths and misconceptions about different races, religions and cultures.

> "We are pleased that multiculturalism is introduced at an early stage of education. However, we are disappointed with the scope and presentation of the subject matter as a whole. While the present curriculum is an improvement over the previous one, it failed to present any contributions of visible minorities towards Alberta's history and development. Of the eight early immigrants, none was of visible minority origin, despite the fact that Chinese Canadians have just celebrated our migration to

> Canada 125 years ago and that both the Chinese and Japanese people immigrated into Alberta in the early nineteen hundreds. We strongly feel that such an omission of historical facts has produced an incomplete and distorted view of the visible minorities to the students. It is not surprising, then, that students perceive that only "White" people contributed to the development of this country and this province."
>
> Chinese Canadian Task Force of Greater Edmonton

It is important that consideration be given to the ways and means by which our curriculum can be expanded to explicitly recognize the contributions of minorities to Alberta's history and development.

The goal of an intercultural education can be reached only if the curriculum focuses on equipping children to live in a culturally diverse society. This means much more than exposing children to the food, song and dance of other cultures. It means exploring similarities and differences between value and belief systems and the opportunities to learn through shared experiences.

> "In the long run, schools can help change social attitudes toward racism if the schools are required to do so or are supported....by the dominant economic and political institutions....Two conditions are necessary: the institutional climate of schools should support the creation of a multicultural society and the curriculum should be designed, at least, to discourage racism."
>
> Matthew Zachariah, Faculty of Education
> University of Calgary

It is entirely possible to achieve an intercultural climate within the school which creates a learning environment that actively promotes tolerance, understanding and respect for human rights. The challenge lies in changing the focus of teaching and learning in the classroom. The need for an integrated approach was expressed by many Albertans who perceived that multiculturalism is not a course that can be taught in forty minutes which a student can pass or fail.

"An integrated curriculum should be mandated, incorporating 'ethnic' content in language arts, social studies, fine arts (art, drama, music) and other suitable subject areas. Such studies will enhance and promote understanding and acceptance. Presently there is a tremendous lack of materials in the English/Language Arts curriculum that could relate to multiculturalism. The areas of art, music and drama must also be given a boost to bring out the cultural appeal of various minorities."

Council of India Societies

To achieve an integrated, experiential approach is the ultimate goal of intercultural education and there are community resources and special initiatives undertaken by individuals and groups which show what a practical, feasible and worthwhile approach it is.

SPECIAL INITIATIVES

It would be impossible to recognize all the dedicated teachers and educators who have contributed to intercultural education but the Committee felt the following warranted special recognition to illustrate what can be accomplished by individuals, a group of teachers and an entire school.

SPEDS

The Society for the Prevention and Elimination of Discrimination and Stereotyping (SPEDS) was developed to help elementary school students understand the concepts of cultural stereotyping and discrimination. SPEDS provides students with the opportunity to examine human differences and similarities and then have first hand experience which exposes them to a variety of groups of people. Alaine Skoreyko introduced the program to Calgary and has been instrumental in developing materials as well as providing inservice training to fellow teachers. All of this has been accomplished on her own initiative, her own time, and at her own cost.

The objectives of the unit are for students to learn and retain the ideas that all people

1. are unique but with common needs
2. have things they can and cannot do well
3. have different attitudes, ideas, beliefs and values that are important to them
4. have emotions and feelings and different ways of expressing them

as well as an appreciation of

5. what prejudice is and how it affects them as well as others
6. the difference between a prejudice and a dislike
7. relationship between not understanding differences and prejudice
8. ideas about cultural and ethnic group differences and how these differences contribute to the enjoyment of the human family

The objectives are achieved through a unique blend of firsthand experience, classroom activity and community involvement.

In an evaluation carried out by the University of Calgary, the SPEDS program was rated very effective in changing values positively at the age 10-11 level. In 1981, in recognition of the International Year of the Disabled, Alberta Education wrote and published a unit called SPEDS and the Disabled, but did not make it compulsory. Teachers may use it on an optional basis. It was prepared for use at the elementary level. The complete SPEDS program emphasizes the multicultural aspect of our differences. With the appreciation today among educators that multiculturalism and the rights of minorities can and should be taught together, there is still no plan at this date by Alberta Education to incorporate the concepts in one all-encompassing SPEDS program.

In 1984, the Alberta Red Cross and the Canadian Council of Christians and Jews provided funding for Cheryl Craig to write a comprehensive SPEDS unit, incorporating SPEDS and the Disabled, which focuses on how individual differences influence the way people treat each other.

CANA KIT COMMUNITY STUDIES

The Cana Kit Community Studies is an example of a different approach which is a national project for elementary schools across Canada

> "The emphasis throughout the entire teaching and learning processes is on people - Canadian people - who they are (or were), what they do, their history, ethnic origins, and all the interactions between and amongst groups to find out what makes a "community" work."
>
> Mrs. Thompson, Fort Park Elementary

This is a truly cooperative venture which is supported by local school boards, the provincial government, the federal government, parents and, of course, the teacher. It is up to the individual teacher if he or she will participate and the time, effort and energy the teacher contributes is a key factor in the success of the project. The underlying theme is to "foster positive attitudes toward all folk" and there is an attempt to build "positive attitudes - accepting attitudes - towards human characteristics, abilities and talents, that are commonly shared". The approach that is utilitized here is effective as it does not attempt to change poor attitudes but rather teach children to respect differences.

> "If personal biases can be identified as differences to be respected with no attached denigration of human dignity we can continue to value a common heritage and ideally build from that very solid foundation."
>
> Mrs. Thompson, Cana-Kit Community Studies

ALEX TAYLOR SCHOOL

The diversity of cultures found in the student population of Alex Taylor School in Edmonton was perceived as a resource to be developed rather than a problem to be overcome and the result is truly a tribute to the efforts of all concerned.

Under the strong leadership and guidance of Steve Ramsankar, principal, Alex Taylor School has evolved into a school that has totally embraced an intercultural approach to education.

The development of high self-esteem is a priority not only with students but with parents, and all school programs are designed to foster tolerance and understanding through interaction and sharing. With total community involvement and support, Alex Taylor School is more than just the neighborhood school, it is a centre of learning for the entire community.

We commend those teachers who have taken the initiative to introduce these enrichment programs and we urge others to at least explore the opportunitites these and other programs prsent for fostering tolerance and understanding in the classroom.

There is an opportunity for Alberta Education to encourage such individual initiatives and to ensure that the programs and resources that have been developed are accessible across the province. It is important that funding be allocated, after evaluation, which would offer recognition and financial initiatives to those who have invested their own personal resources in contributing to intercultural education.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

It is important to stress that the school must not work in isolation and that there is, in fact, a wealth of resources in the community that administrators, teachers and students should be made aware of and utilize. Whether available through a government agency, service groups or community groups, the resources available can only serve to add new dimensions to the options available to teachers.

ALBERTA PEOPLE KIT

A major initiative in the field of multicultural education was recently announced by the Alberta Cultural Heritage Foundation. The Alberta People Kit is a multimedia cultural heritage awareness education kit developed primarily for upper elementary classes. Its purpose is to assist teachers and students to explore the different cultures, customs and traditions of Alberta's people. The Kit is being sold at a greatly reduced cost as the development and production costs were subsidized by the Alberta Cultural Heritage Foundation.

> "The Alberta People Kit uses a teaching unit framework that reflects the social inquiry process orientation of the Alberta social studies program. This self-contained kit provides a wide range of instructional materials, as well as carefully structured and sequenced plans for both 'teacher directed' and 'individualized' learning experiences. Each of the six learning centres is organized around a central theme or set of related cultural heritage concepts. Designed to allow students to work individually or in small groups, with a minimum of teacher direction, each learning centre offers a combination of basic activities of 'jobs' and additional enrichment or 'bonus' activities. Specific task assignments and explorations encourage students to pursue cognitive and affective objectives, to use different learning strategies, and to incorporate a variety of materials and ideas during the course of their research. However, the learning centre activities can be adapted to meet the particular needs and preferred teaching/learning styles of different teachers and students."

The Alberta People Kit is an example of the leadership shown in Alberta by government agencies and citizens. It is recognition that education in the classroom can only reinforce their continuing efforts in the community.

ALBERTA HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

The Alberta Human Rights Commission has two legislative mandates - one to enforce the provisions of The Individual's Rights Protection Act and the other to design and conduct educational programs with the objective of eliminating discrimination.

The awareness that education is as important as enforcement is indicated by the following efforts in the educational field.

- Education officers are based in Calgary and Edmonton and conduct workshops, visit schools, and speak to special interest groups
- A resource centre on racism which provides reference books, films and teaching aids is maintained in Edmonton
- In 1983, a province-wide advertising campaign aimed at combatting racism in Alberta was initiated.
- All educational programs, services and materials are available to the public upon request with no fee charged

The Committee heard from many who fully supported the current province wide program of the Alberta Human Rights Commission and also wanted the public education programs expanded. Target groups for educational programs are the workplace, educational institutions and special groups. In 1983/84, 43.7% of the workshops conducted by the Alberta Human Rights Commission were in the schools, with over 2,000 participants. Curriculum and resource material are available for all age groups and samples include:

"Buttonville" - a 28 minute film and teacher's guide is designed for both Division I and II students in either Social Studies or Language Arts. The objective of the film is to introduce children to the topic of human rights.

"Respecting Our Differences" - a curriculum unit designed for grade ten students which exposes students to the cognitive and affective aspects of prejudice and discrimination.

To conclude, the resources in the community are limited only by the motivation and imagination of the concerned individuals and groups.

The goals of Red Cross Youth include increasing health and safety practices, human understanding and service to other young people. To help realize these goals, Red Cross Youth have developed instructional materials for teachers to use and which are designed to meet the requirements of the Alberta curriculum as well as requiring little additional teacher preparation. In the 1982-83 school year, approximately 8,000 Alberta students in elementary and junior high have studied the materials. Red Cross Youth publishes a guide to the resources currently available and is currently developing plans to instigate an inter-agency conference for inservicing teachers with regard to existing instructional materials and methods for teaching tolerance and understanding.

The play "The New Canadian Kid" was written in response to a need to develop understanding of the experiences of immigrant children and was produced by Alberta Theatre Projects, a Calgary theatre company, in cooperation with social studies and drama teachers employed by the Calgary Board of Education.

The National Council of Jewish Women of Canada initiated and produced the "Learners' Box", the objective of which is to increase awareness of Judaism and the basic aspects of Jewish family life. Their motivation was to supply a learning resource to the classroom which will teach children of all faiths and ethnic backgrounds to work and play together in harmony and contribute to their intercultural understanding.

All of these initiatives are viable, effective programs working today in Alberta. The degree to which they are utilized in the classroom is entirely at the discretion of the local school jurisdiction, its administrators and teachers, as none are mandatory. The fact that these enrichment programs are available is a positive development in the field of intercultural education and the availability of these programs must continue to be communicated to all teachers.

SECTION 3

INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION AND THE NEEDS OF IMMIGRANTS

The assistance provided to immigrants in becoming full participants in our culture is a good measure of our society's understanding and commitment to the principles of intercultural education.

Adjusting to a new culture is a challenging and difficult task even under the best of circumstances. Having to adjust in settings where other people do not understand the problems of learning new ways of living and a new language, or where the immigrant's linguistic and cultural differences are seen as inherently inferior, may undermine self esteem to the extent that successful adjustment is impossible.

Immigrants from different cultures have long been subjects of stereotyping and prejudice. Not being familiar with the local language and customs after they first arrive, they naturally have little facility with the local ways. in these initial stages, their awkwardness may become a source of ridicule and may be seen as an inherent characteristic of the person himself or the culture from which he came, rather than an early stage of learning. The Committee frequently heard that immigrant children are more likely to be "teased and picked-on" by other children.

Insensitivity is not confined to children. An employer from Lacombe told the Committee of the problems he observed when he and others in the district sponsored some refugee families from South East Asia. Amid all of the problems of language and cultural adjustments, which nobody was quite prepared for, the refugees were subjected to "harassment and ridicule". This lack of understanding was aggravated by a lack of effective support to assist the immigrants to understand the local ways.

> "Our observation was that most of the racial discrimination was due to unnecessary irritation. Even though all of the refugees attended English classes for three months, they had not learned enough English to be able to indentify ordinary hand tools....they did not learn

> anything about Canadian customs and habits. Our Canadian born employees had never learned anything about customs and habit of the Vietnamese, Chinese and Laotian culture to be able to understand anything about them...(We need courses) to teach all students in higher grades of elementary or junior high school about the cultures and habits of different countries, not as entertainment, but to teach them to respect and appreciate other cultures."
>
> Ben De Boon, Lacombe

Mr. De Boon's caution that learning about other cultures should not be simply "entertainment" may seem unnecessary at first, but it refers to a very real difficulty. There is a common tendency to see cultural differences in superficial terms, and this leads to unrealistic ideas about the role of culture in personal life.

> "Their (the immigrants') culture is more than dress, diet, dance, language and unusual customs. These are only observable aspects of culture that have a basis of values, attitudes, beliefs and traditions that direct all their activities."
>
> Glenda McCue, Lethbridge School District #51

Because culture is often seen simplistically, educators frequently do not appreciate the value of cultural diversity or the contribution immigrants can make.

> "Educational institutions rarely promote the advantages of cultural diversity and many ESL students never successfully participate in the mainstream of school life because of feelings of inferiority and not belonging because they have not received any positive acknowledgement of their cultural background."
>
> Glenda McCue, Lethbridge School District #51

When schools fail to appreciate the advantages of cultural diversity in the classroom, the consequences are serious. One is the self-protective withdrawal of many immigrants from active participation in the school, and the second is the missed opportunity to learn from the personal experiences of the immigrant students.

Many opportunities for intercultural education are missed in the classroom because of an overly narrow view of the curriculum, and teaching personnel who have limited or no experience in inter-cultural communication. By taking advantage of ethnic diversity in the classroom, understanding replaces suspicion, and respect displaces prejudice.

To use an intercultural approach in the classroom, teachers need ongoing sensitization to the linguistic and cultural needs of students, and time and assistance to develop and implement programs. Students need to have sensitization experiences in order to appreciate the problems encountered in living in a different culture with a new language. They also need to be involved in cooperative learning experiences where all students contribute in some way to the group.

The Committee is very impressed by the effectiveness, sensitivity, and intercultural sophistication developed in many of the English as a Second Language (ESL) programs attached to local boards throughout the province. Many of these programs are on the cutting edge of development for intercultural education because of their need to focus on practical and effective ways to help people to learn and adapt to having two cultures and languages. The talented and dedicated people developing these programs tell us that they cannot meet existing demands and that the regular classroom programs are, on the whole, far from intercultural in nature. There is clearly much pioneering work to be done.

Adjusting to a new culture frequently places great strains on the family because of the differences in the way different generations adjust to the new culture. The children tend to learn the language and new customs more quickly because of their school experience and association with other children. Adjusting more slowly, perhaps with little contact outside their own cultural circle, the parents may feel that their children are abandoning their cultural heritage. Insensitivity by school authorities can only make matters worse.

English as a Second Language programs and practical "cultural survival" courses must be available to immigrant parents as well as students, and parents must be assisted in understanding their rights and responsibilities relative to the education of their children. The Committee commends the work being done by both

the Calgary and Edmonton Immigrant Aid Societies in providing a variety of services for immigrant families in their regions and helping their local school jurisdictions to develop programs to meet more effectively the needs of immigrants.

Nowhere is the variety of humanity and circumstance more sharply focused than among our recent immigrant population, and nowhere is there a better opportunity to apply the principles of tolerance, understanding, and respect.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In consideration of the following:

Alberta is a multicultural society;

The role of education becomes paramount in teaching the skills and attitudes necessary for citizens to fully develop in a pluralistic society;

Our schools must be utilized as active, vital participants in fostering intercultural awareness, understanding and appreciation of diversity;

the Committee on Tolerance and understanding recommends:

I THAT the Government of Alberta immediately prepare, adopt and implement an Intercultural Education Policy, the objectives being:

- To assist and encourage each student to develop and maintain confidence and a sense of self-esteem
- To enable all children to appreciate cultural diversity and participate in exploring the opportunities it presents
- To ensure the history and contemporary life of all cultures are adquately and accurately reflected and portrayed in the overall curriculum of the public schools
- To encourage communications, cooperation, and consultation with cultural groups to ensure their participation in the education system
- To develop curricular and co-curricular programs which are consistent with the needs and aspirations of cultural groups in the community.

II THAT the Government of Alberta review and update the Goals of Education and the Goals of Schooling to state explicitly its commitment to ensuring Alberta's children

- develop and retain a sense of personal identity by becoming acquainted with the historical roots of the community in which they live as well as maintaining a sense of continuity with the culture of their origin;
- understand and appreciate the points of view of ethnic and cultural groups other than their own;
- develop an understanding of such concepts as community, conflict, culture, and interdependence;
- learn the social skills and attitudes upon which effective and responsible co-operation and participation depend.

III THAT Alberta Education incorporate the following specific recommendations in the policies, programs and procedures of the Intercultural Education Policy:

a) THAT Alberta Education establish the Intercultural Education Development Fund to provide grants to individuals and groups such as those outlined in the Special Initiatives section of this discussion paper, for the development and dissemination of programs, resource units and materials which meet the criteria of supporting and enhancing intercultural education;

b) THAT Alberta Education continue its commendable initiatives in the area of language instruction and expand opportunities and programs for language instruction where financial and manpower resources permit;

c) THAT Alberta Education, in current and future development of learning resource selection, ensure that the cultural diversity of Alberta's ethnic groups is well represented.

d) THAT each school jurisdiction develop and adopt a policy on intercultural education and that this policy be reviewed and ratified by the Board of Trustees upon election to office;

e) THAT school boards formulate and implement an ongoing communications program to ensure the policy on intercultural education is communicated to all staff, students and parents;

f) THAT school boards develop and provide introductory and refresher professional development inservice programs for administrators, teachers and support staff with the specific objectives:

- to ensure an awareness of multiculturalism
- to examine personal attitudes and increase knowledge and skills in intercultural education
- to specifically equip teachers to apply knowledge to handling stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, racism, ethnocentrism and bigotry in the classroom
- to familiarize teachers with resources that are available thoughout the province;

g) THAT school boards utilize the educational services of the Alberta Human Rights Commission to build intercultural awareness and access anti-discrimination educational programs;

h) THAT school boards establish an advisory committee, with parent representation from cultural communities, with the objective of providing an informal mechanism to review requests for official, heritage or English as a Second Language instruction and identify opportunities to increase students' and parents' appreciation of language instruction in the schools.

i) THAT the Faculties of Education at Alberta's post-secondary institutions recognize and affirm their responsibility in the field of intercultural education by ensuring that students gain the knowledge, skills and practical training through their courses of study to equip them to use an intercultural approach.

j) THAT school boards offer tutorial sessions for immigrant students who request assistance in writing the Diploma Examinations.

k) THAT school boards expand English as Second Language courses to adequately meet demands at all grade levels, including adult education.

l) THAT the Committee on Tolerance and Understanding endorses Alberta Education's pilot program to develop English as a Second Language courses which, after the completion of an introductory course, high school students will be able to take as credit courses.